

Tributes to a great personality

MANY tributes have been paid this week to a great personality, particularly in the world of sport, following the death at Wycombe General Hospital on Friday of Mr. Jack Smethurst, chairman of Wycombe Wanderers F.C. and a former superintendent of police at High Wycombe.

Mr. Smethurst, whose home was at Little Foxes, Downley Common, was 64.

Ill-health forced his early retirement from the police force but he remained cheerfully active despite several long spells in hospital for operative treatment.

He had entered hospital again recently and was thought to be making progress but suffered a heart attack from which he did not recover.

police force, Mr. Smethurst held part-time administrative posts with the High Wycombe garages of H. A. Saunders Ltd. and Sawney's, of Desborough Avenue.

Sportsman

A native of Oldham, Lancashire, he early developed a passion for sport. A fine swimmer, he won a number of competitive honours. He played football — soccer and rugby — and cricket as a young man, and played golf in his later years. But it was in soccer that he found his main interest.

He was active with the Bucks Constabulary soccer squad and later developed that interest with Wycombe Wanderers, becoming a vice-president. In 1965 he succeeded the late Mr. Eric Webb as chairman and helped to guide the club to the great heights it reached in the amateur world in recent seasons.

It was from a hospital bed overlooking Loakes Park, the Wanderers' ground, however, that he watched the history making F.A. Cup games last season — with the team lining up to wave him a salute.

Good humour

A man of firm decision, but always fair and good-humoured, Mr. Smethurst was popular alike with his fellow officials and with the players and supporters. And he had made a great contribution to football over the wider sphere of Berks and Bucks and with the Rothman's Isthmian League.

Before joining the Bucks Constabulary, Mr. Smethurst served for three years with the Grenadier Guards. Joining the police force as a constable, he earned promotion to High Wycombe as Superintendent, having served previously in various ranks at Newport Pagnell, Bletchley, Burnham and Buckingham.

He had been a Mason and was for some years a member of the Rotary Club of High Wycombe, demonstrating particularly in community service work his great gift of friendship and helpfulness.

For nearly ten years he was a member of the Anglo-American Community Relations Committee at the USAF base at High Wycombe and was popular as a quiz panel member there for his wide-ranging knowledge and ready wit.

Wycombe Abbey School girls welcomed him annually for his "off the cuff" lecture talks.

Retirement

After his retirement from the



He leaves a widow, a son and daughter and four grandchildren. Both his children were university graduates. Son Colin is a lecturer in French at Liverpool University, and Jacqueline, formerly a teacher at Wycombe High School, now has an administrative post at an American university. Both are married to University lecturers.

The Town Mayor of High Wycombe, Councillor I. Kirkwood, was among those attending the funeral service at High Wycombe Parish Church on Tuesday, conducted by the Rev. Kingsley Joyce.

Past and present members of the Thames Valley Police Force and of the old Bucks Constabulary were present, with officials and players of Wycombe Wanderers FC, the FA, Isthmian League and Berks and Bucks FA official, referees, solicitors and representatives of the magistracy, with mourners from other community organisations.

The Rev. Kingsley Joyce said that Mr. Smethurst had given much of his time to work in service of others. "Such a man," he said, "is not easy to find." He had set an example, and exerted an influence on others, by his unselfish endeavour and had indeed been an inspiration.